

Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney (JVOIS) press release 11 July 2025: ## Jillian Segal's plan to silence criticism of Israel will increase antisemitism.

Jewish Voices of Inner Sydney strongly rejects Jillian Segal's plan.

Segal's central action is the adoption of the widely criticised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The definition has been discredited because it conflates legitimate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. Its critics include the lead author Kenneth Stern who says "I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it". (The Guardian 13 December 2019). Criticism of the definition is widespread, including by organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and B'Tselem, one of the main Israeli human rights organisations. Critics also include innumerable Jewish antisemitism and holocaust scholars.

Segal's plan is similar to the actions by the Trump administration. She proposes to use the IHRA definition to force universities and cultural institutions to pull back from discussion about Israel and Palestine by threatening to withdraw government funding.

Without evidence or any specific examples, Segal insists that Australians are being fed biased and distorted narratives about Israel. It seems clear that Segal feels that reporting and discussion that is critical of Israel is inherently biased against Israel.

At the same time she is promoting a definition of antisemitism that overtly links Australian Jews to Israel. Australians are broadly aware that Israel is active in a what the International Court of Justice described as a plausible genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. In this context, Segal formally linking Australian Jews to Israel may increase antisemitism in the community.

Segal has made a number of unsubstantiated claims that contradict our direct knowledge and experience, including repeated but untrue allegations that there was widespread antisemitism at university campuses including the University of Sydney protest camp. Members of JVOIS work at the university and visit regularly, and there was criticism of Israel, but no hatred of Jews.

JVOIS have engaged productively with The University of Sydney over Universities Australia's contested definition of antisemitism that draws heavily on the IHRA definition.

JVOIS urge the government to reject Segal's recommendation to use the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and her extraordinary proposal to be empowered to unilaterally defund our universities and cultural institutions. Instead the government should focus on reducing all forms of discrimination and racism.